



# Ideas for Asthma Awareness Activities

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for your community. Things to do include:

- ▶ Hold an asthma awareness event that is open to the public with elected officials and local celebrities. Ask your governor or mayor to issue an Asthma Awareness Month proclamation. Have an EPA or health official make a brief presentation on the asthma epidemic and your organization's efforts to combat the disease. Issue a press release announcing the event (see template on page 11).
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma awareness event at a local school, library, hospital, health clinic, or state capitol. Partner with other local organizations involved in asthma education in order to pool resources and increase attention and publicity for the event.
- ▶ Find out if any local leaders or celebrities have asthma and ask them to participate in your event.
- ▶ Because asthma disproportionately affects African-American children, contact local Black churches in your area to find out how you can participate in their Mother's Day programs.
- ▶ Arrange to display and distribute asthma educational materials at local sporting events (e.g., baseball, soccer).
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma awareness event with your local PBS station featuring the "Buster's Breathless" episode of ARTHUR®. To visit ARTHUR®'s Web site, go to <http://pbskids.org/arthur>.
- ▶ Ask local television and radio stations to include EPA's asthma and secondhand smoke public service announcements in their programming.
- ▶ Schedule local TV and radio interviews to talk about asthma and your organization's programs to educate the public on the role environmental asthma triggers play in the development of asthma.
- ▶ Contact area health insurers and managed care organizations to promote asthma education. See page 9 for a list of possible activities.
- ▶ Contact the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) or the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) to arrange professional educational seminars, such as AAFA's "Asthma Management and Education Program," for health professionals.

## Ideas for Asthma Awareness Activities (continued)

- ▶ Introduce local schools to the *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Kit* to protect all children from asthma triggers.
- ▶ Contact state or local education associations for support in sponsoring asthma awareness activities in your local schools.
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma walkathon. Invite local partners, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies to provide asthma educational displays and materials.
- ▶ Contact area university medical schools and/or allied health programs such as nursing, respiratory therapy, or pharmacy to get their students involved in your event.
- ▶ Hold an asthma health fair offering free pulmonary screenings and education on environmental asthma triggers and management. Ask local partners, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies to provide educational displays and materials.
- ▶ Ask local hospitals, clinics, doctors' offices, and pharmacies to display and distribute asthma educational materials.
- ▶ Arrange to display and distribute asthma educational brochures at public libraries, community centers, or other popular places.
- ▶ Ask local chapters of health professional organizations (i.e., respiratory therapists, nurses, pulmonologists, and pediatricians) to include articles in their newsletters on the role environmental asthma triggers play in the development and exacerbation of asthma, and encourage them to incorporate environmental control in their patients' asthma management plans.

## Past Asthma Awareness Month Activities

Hundreds of events take place across the country each year during Asthma Awareness Month. On World Asthma Day 2003, to increase public awareness locally, staff from EPA's headquarters in Washington, DC distributed educational materials, including children's games, brochures, and videos to raise public awareness of indoor pollutants that can trigger asthma episodes. We attended a Baltimore Orioles baseball game in Baltimore, Maryland where hundreds of fans received information about managing asthma and the importance of reducing exposure to indoor asthma triggers. While at the game, we showed thousands of fans at the stadium EPA's Goldfish Public Service Announcement, which includes one child's poignant description of what an asthma attack feels like: "I feel like a fish with no water." You can easily organize similar events in your community. Visit [www.epa.gov/asthma](http://www.epa.gov/asthma) to see a list of free materials, like the PSAs, children's games, and videos described above, that EPA will provide for your event at no cost.

